



Smoked Mushroom Risotto with Smoked Parmesan Crisps



Ingredients (Serves 2)

15g dried smoked mushrooms
85g smoked parmesan cheese, finely grated
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
1 stick celery, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, finely crushed
1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves, chopped
170g arborio rice
freshly ground black pepper
half a glass dry cider
500ml hot chicken stock, it's fine to use a stock cube
knob of butter

Method

Place the dried smoked mushrooms into a bowl and pour over boiled water to just cover and leave to soak for 30 minutes.

Drain the mushrooms, reserving the liquid, taking care to leave any grit behind. Pat the mushrooms dry.

Now make the smoked parmesan crisps.

Preheat oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4.

Line a baking sheet with non-stick baking paper.

Spoon the grated cheese into eight neat mounds and grind over some fresh black pepper. Bake the cheese in the oven for five minutes or until melted and golden-brown. Remove from the oven and leave to cool and harden.

Heat the oil in a large heavy saucepan and add the onion, garlic and celery, cook until the raw smell disappears from the onions. Be careful not to let them burn – you just want them to be pale and translucent.

Stir in the thyme and tip in the rice, fry gently, whilst stirring, so that the rice becomes completely coated. Then add the cider, keep stirring until all the liquid has been absorbed. Season generously with black pepper.

Now add a little of the stock and on a gentle heat keep stirring the rice as it cooks to release its starch and give a creamy texture. When the rice has absorbed all the liquid, add more stock. Continue to stir. You will need to repeat this process until all the stock is used up. The risotto is done when the rice has increased in volume. It should have a lightly nutty bite to it and also be moist with a liquid creamy sauce.

Keep the risotto on a low heat while you melt the knob of butter in a frying pan. Add the mushrooms and sauté them until they are slightly golden, tip them into the risotto (saving some of the best looking ones for garnish) along with the butter and mix in well.

Serve in bowls topped with the smoked parmesan crisps and the rest of the mushrooms.